United Nations

Press Release

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Security Council holds consultations to discuss safety of Palestinians in occupied territory.

- Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs warns against possibility of future energy crisis due to financial constraints of OPEC countries.

- Human Rights Committee hears call for measures to deal with countries failing to fulfil reporting obligations under United Nations human rights instruments.

- Intergovernmental Group Monitoring Supply and Shipment of Oil Products to South Africa urged to maintain sanctions until irreversible change occurs in country.

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The Security Council was scheduled to hold consultations late this afternoon to discuss a Presidential statement prepared by Austria on the recent expulsion of four Palestinians from the occupied territory by Israeli authorities. The Council President, Peter Hohenfellner of Austria, held bilateral consultations with the members throughout the day to discuss the statement.

In a related development, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has called for immediate action by the Security Council to ensure the safe and immediate return of all expelled Palestinians. The request, contained in a letter to the Council yesterday, follows Israel's announcement over the weekend to deport four Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

Transmitting the letter, the Deputy Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, Nasser Al-Kidwa, acting upon instructions from PLO, called Israel's decision a flagrant violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and various Council resolutions.

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For information media—not an official record

The Committee on Natural Resources, charged with promoting the exploration, development and management of the world's natural resources began its twelfth session yesterday, hearing a statement by the Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, Rafeeuddin Ahmed.

Speaking of the energy situation, he said the recent Persian Gulf war had caused an additional oil import outlay of about $43 billion -- some $33 billion from the developed market economies, $2 billion from Eastern Europe and $8 billion from the oil-importing developing countries. The impact had been particularly felt in several countries of Eastern Europe and the developing world.

Energy projections to the year 2000 and beyond indicated a substantial increase in the demand for oil from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), especially from the Gulf area, he said, because of stagnation in production in non-OPEC developing countries and the continuing reduction in oil output in the United States and the Soviet Union. He warned against the possibility of another energy crisis in a few years, as financial constraints in many OPEC countries affected their ability to expand production capacities. He stressed the need for international cooperation to ensure long-term stability in the oil markets, and the important role the Committee could play in promoting such cooperation.

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Steps have to be taken to deal with the problem of countries who do not fulfil their reporting obligations under United Nations human rights instruments.

That was the view expressed by a representative of the Geneva-based Centre for Human Rights, Enayat Houshmand, who opened the forty-first session of the Human Rights Committee yesterday at Headquarters.

He suggested that non-complying States parties should be reported to the General Assembly or should be offered technical assistance and training. Other steps being taken to deal with the problem of non-compliance, he said, included direct contacts with the representatives of the countries concerned.

Mr. Houshmand recalled that the General Assembly had approved last December the convening of a World Conference on Human Rights in 1993. The Conference would, among other things, review the progress made in the human rights field since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948.

The Human Rights Committee is scheduled to review the periodic reports of Sweden, the United Kingdom, India, Panama and Sri Lanka during this three-week session which ends on 12 April.

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The Intergovernmental Group to Monitor the Supply and Shipment of Oil and Petroleum Products to South Africa, at its first meeting of the year, was told by its Chairman, Anthony B. Nyakyi (United Republic of Tanzania), that recent estimates of South Africa's foreign oil needs far surpassed the claims of the regime and demonstrated the potential effectiveness of the ban in the struggle against apartheid.

Other speakers emphasized the need to adopt a "cautious optimism" regarding recent changes in apartheid laws. They said sanctions in general, and the oil embargo in particular, must be maintained until profound and irreversible change occurred in South Africa.

The Intergovernmental Group was established by the General Assembly in 1986. Its 10 members are: Algeria, Cuba, Indonesia, Kuwait, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Ukraine and United Republic of Tanzania.

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